

**Farmers Market Promotion Program (FMPP)  
Final Performance Report**

The final performance report summarizes the outcome of your FMPP award objectives. As stated in the FMPP Terms and Conditions, you will not be eligible for future FMPP or Local Food Promotion Program grant funding unless all close-out procedures are completed, including satisfactory submission of this final performance report.

This final report will be made available to the public once it is approved by FMPP staff. Write the report in a way that promotes your project's accomplishments, as this document will serve as not only a learning tool, but a promotional tool to support local and regional food programs. Particularly, recipients are expected to provide both qualitative and quantitative results to convey the activities and accomplishments of the work.

The report is limited to 10 pages and is due **within 90 days** of the project's performance period end date, or sooner if the project is complete. Provide answers to each question, or answer "not applicable" where necessary. It is recommended that you email or fax your completed performance report to FMPP staff to avoid delays:

FMPP Phone: 202-690-4152; Email: [USDAFMPPQuestions@ams.usda.gov](mailto:USDAFMPPQuestions@ams.usda.gov); Fax: 202-690-4152

Should you need to mail your documents via hard copy, contact FMPP staff to obtain mailing instructions.

<b>Report Date Range:</b> <i>(e.g. September 30, 20XX-September 29, 20XX)</i>	September 30, 2015 – March 30, 2018
<b>Authorized Representative Name:</b>	Kimberly Mascarella
<b>Authorized Representative Phone:</b>	330-856-3461
<b>Authorized Representative Email:</b>	<a href="mailto:Kim.mascarella@howlandtownship.org">Kim.mascarella@howlandtownship.org</a>
<b>Recipient Organization Name:</b>	Howland Township
<b>Project Title as Stated on Grant Agreement:</b>	Howland Farmers Market Expansion Project
<b>Grant Agreement Number:</b> <i>(e.g. 14-FMPPX-XX-XXXX)</i>	15FMPP0H0034
<b>Year Grant was Awarded:</b>	2015
<b>Project City/State:</b>	Warren, Ohio
<b>Total Awarded Budget:</b>	\$88,985

FMPP staff may contact you to follow up for long-term success stories. Who may we contact?

☒ Same Authorized Representative listed above (check if applicable).

☐ Different individual: Name: \_\_\_\_\_; Email: \_\_\_\_\_; Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, an agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number. The valid OMB control number for this information collection is 0581-0287. The time required to complete this information collection is estimated to average 4 hours per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable sex, marital status, or familial status, parental status religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program (not all prohibited bases apply to all programs). Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD). To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (800) 795-3272 (voice) or (202) 720-6382 (TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

1. State the goals/objectives of your project as outlined in the grant narrative and/or approved by FMPP staff. If the goals/objectives from the narrative have changed from the grant narrative, please highlight those changes (e.g. “new objective”, “new contact”, “new consultant”, etc.). You may add additional goals/objectives if necessary. For each item below, qualitatively discuss the progress made and indicate the impact on the community, if any.

- i. Goal/Objective 1: **Enhance outreach through targeted promotions to introduce more of the community to the market and to encourage customers to visit more often.**

**PROMOTIONAL TEXTING SERVICE**

- a. Progress Made: The USDA FMPP grant enabled the Howland Farmers Market to contract with FarmFan to initiate an opt-in text reminder service for market customers. The service not only reminded customers to visit the market but offered market specials and a frequent shopper rewards program meant to boost vendor sales. FarmFan text service was used for the entire grant period. One text message a week was sent to approximately 400 users enrolled in the service. We recently converted to a less expensive texting service that allows for more messaging. All 400 users are being transferred to the new service.
- b. Impact on Community: Market staff randomly surveyed customers at the market to determine how they had heard about the market. Those who said they were at the market because of a text message, indicated that they relied on the text as a reminder. Based on survey results, staff determined that this mode of outreach was effective and decided to continue past grant period.

**PROMOTIONAL MATERIALS (Video and Print)**

- a. Progress Made: The USDA FMPP grant enabled us to contract with a local production company, 2 Ticks and the Dog Productions, to create six promotional videos, each featuring a different category of market vendor; two produce vendors, a livestock operation, an apiary, a greenhouse nursery, and a home-based bakery. Originally, we proposed creating ten promotional videos but due to vendor logistics, six were produced. In addition to the six videos, two commercials were professionally produced, a 15 second commercial and a 30 second commercial, both of which ran on local cable channels in 2016. The Farm Fresh Express videos can be viewed in their entirety at [www.howlandfarmersmarket.com](http://www.howlandfarmersmarket.com). Here are summaries of the videos:



Farm Fresh Express 2: Amanda and Barry Franks of Joe Schmo’s Kitchen in Youngstown Ohio buys local peppers and transforms them into hot peppers in oil, a hometown favorite. Joe Schmo’s uses the Common Wealth Kitchen Incubator in Youngstown to make their product.

Farm Fresh Express 1: Melissa and Aaron Miller of Miller Livestock Co, Kinsman, Ohio discussed their livestock operation and the importance of buying from local growers and the ripple effect on the local economy.





Farm Fresh Express 3: Dr. Holly Maggiano of Earth Angel Farm assists people in need of developing life and work skills using agriculture. Earth Angel Farm works with the developmentally disabled and other vulnerable populations. They engage their participants in their greenhouse program, composting, and managing a small herd of goats.

Farm Fresh Express #4: Bruce and Christina Vance of Field Fresh Farm, Jefferson Ohio brings locally grown produce to the market. Although they bring a diversity of produce to the market, they are known for their many varieties of potatoes.



Farm Fresh Express #5: Jerry and Cyndi Stevens of Me and My Honey LLC Apiary, Warren Ohio are a staple of the Howland Farmers Market. They sell honey and value-added honey product such as honey cream, comb, and health and beauty items like balms and creams.

Farm Fresh Express #6: Aubrey Gustovich of Whipped by Aubrey is a home-based bakery with a loyal following. She is mindful of using local ingredients in her baked goods and offers a wide variety of healthier options like gluten free and vegan.



In addition to the six Farm Fresh Express Videos, two made-for-cable commercials were produced by 2 Ticks and the Dog productions. The commercials aired on local television.

Additionally, the USDA FMPP grant enabled the Howland Farmers Market to develop promotional materials to boost attendance at the newly established winter market. Small magnets were designed and distributed with the winter market dates, location, and contact information. The winter markets were held twice monthly November through May in program years 2015-16, 2016-17, and 2017-18.

- b. Impact on Community: The Farm Fresh Express videos were widely shared to promote the market and to encourage a deeper relationship between the consumer and producer/grower. Feedback from viewers has been positive in that they appreciate seeing where their food is being grown or made. The vendor-based promotional videos and commercials helped to bring the rural landscape and the working lives of our vendors to life. Overall market gross sales have grown by 86% from 2014 baseline figures. And the winter market itself grew in gross sales and number of vendor participation from the start of the grant period.

Market Year	2015-16 winter market	2016-2017 winter market	2017-2018 winter market
Gross Sales	\$21,893.25	\$39,939.05	\$41,402.00
Registered Vendors	17	31	32

ii. Goal/Objective 2: **Provide professional development training to market vendors and staff in an effort to enhance the quality of the market.**

a. Progress Made:

- The following training opportunities were supported by the USDA grant.  
April 20, 2016: Staff attended “The Farmer Mini Conference” sponsored by the OSU Extension and the Trumbull Neighborhood Partnership, a local non-profit entity.  
March 15, 2016: Fourteen (14) vendors and one staff attended Ohio State University Extension Good Agriculture Practices (GAP) training and received certifications. This training prepares vendors to use best practices when harvesting and preparing produce for sale at the market.  
July 15, 2016: Five (5) vendors and one staff attended an Ohio State University Extension cottage food workshop. Product development, safe handling, labeling, pricing and marketing strategies were discussed.  
Summer 2017: Market staff attended Ohio Department of Agriculture Product Safety training and WIC voucher training.  
January 10-11, 2017 & March 14 2017: Four (4) vendors and one staff attended Senior Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE) workshops on Small Business Accounting and Advanced Marketing with Electronic Media.  
March 11, 2017: Twenty-three (23) vendors and one staff attended a marketing workshop held by 2 Ticks and the Dog Productions. The workshop provided instructions on how to film their own promotional videos for marketing purposes. One-on-one sessions were held immediately after with eight vendors.  
ONGOING TRAINING: SCORE continues to mentor market vendors through their business mentorship program.

b. Impact on Community:

There were overall fifty-six (56) vendors registered for the Howland Farmers Market during the grant period. Staff arranged five training opportunities with forty-six (46) attendees. This number does not include the five (5) vendors who participated in the business mentorship program offered through SCORE. We witnessed first-hand the professional growth of our vendors into more professional, engaging, and viable businesses. Their labels have become more attractive and informative, their pricing

more competitive and reflective of production inputs, and their knowledge of safe food handling practices have improved to better ensure product safety.

iii. Goal/Objective 3: **Expand the Howland Farmers Market to year-round market to promote market growth.**

- a. Progress Made: Prior to the USDA FMPP grant, the winter market was held once per month outdoors where four to twelve vendors attended. After the grant award, Howland Township negotiated a lease agreement with the Children's Rehabilitation Center in Howland Township and the winter market moved indoors November of 2015 through May 2016 and continued for two additional seasons, November 2016 – May 2017 and November 2017 – May 2018. The winter market is held twice monthly, on the first and third Saturday's of each month from November through May. New portable signage was purchased through the grant to help customers find the winter market.
- b. Impact on Community: The winter market has allowed market vendors to grow their businesses and invest in their future. Farms have added hoop houses to extend the growing season into the winter months and our food producers are now enjoying year-round income. Consumers stay connected with their farmers throughout the year. The table below reflects the growth of the winter market since moving indoors. It has grown both in gross sales and in the number of vendors.

Market Year	2015-16 winter market	2016-2017 winter market	2017-2018 winter market
Gross Sales	\$21,893.25	\$39,939.05	\$41,402.00
Registered Vendors	17	31	32

iv. Goal/Objective 4: **Hire new employee to implement grant and to take the market to the next level.**

- a. Progress Made: In January 2016, the Howland Township Trustees hired a part-time Farmers Market Coordinator to implement the objectives of the USDA FMPP grant and to grow the market. The market has grown into a year-round market that requires ongoing coordination. Although the USDA FMPP grant support has ended, the Township Trustees have agreed to fund the coordinator position. This is due to the documented growth of the market and the increase in market revenue. This is significant given the shrinking budgets of local governments. The coordinator will be permanently housed at the Howland Township Administration Building and have access to work space and support staff.
- b. Impact on Community: The hiring of a farmers market coordinator has proved to be beneficial to the Howland Farmers Market, its vendors, and the community. The vendors now have a central contact for anything that involves the Farmers Market. The coordinator continues to arrange education and training opportunities for the vendors, improve marketing outreach, market logistics, and fundraising. We anticipate continue growth for the market.

v. Goal/Objective 4: **Improve food literacy.**

- a. Progress Made: The USDA FMPP grant enabled the Howland Farmers Market to partner with the Ohio State University Extension Office to reproduce **FARM TO HEALTH NUTRITIONAL CARD SERIES**. The 5x7 cards focused on Tomatoes, Yellow



Sweet Corn, Dark Green Leafy Vegetables, Green Beans and Pea Pods, Cruciferous Vegetables, Beets, Peppers, and Fruits (Apples, Peaches, Pears, Plums and Apricots). The cards identified nutritional information, key nutrients, how they improve health, optimal storage and preparation to maintain maximum nutritional value, and recipes.

- b. Impact on Community: Market staff distributed cards to vendors who are selling the targeted item i.e. tomatoes, peppers, greens, in order to give consumers more information on their purchases. Cards are also made available at the information tent at every market when the targeted item is available. We have received positive feedback from customer on the cards. The cards are popular and will be made available for the 2018 season.

vi. Goal/Objective 4: **Advance the local food economy through partnerships.**

- a. Progress Made: The Howland Farmers Market partnered with the Lake to River Food Cooperative in Youngstown, Ohio to bring agricultural product on a regional scale to more consumers. The Lake to River Food Coop operates an online market that purchases farm produce and then delivers to restaurants, institutions, or drop-off locations to enable a greater distribution of regional agricultural product. The Howland Farmers Market established a weekly drop-off location at the township building. There are 96 registered users of the service who designated Howland Township as their pick-up location.

We partnered with the Common Wealth Kitchen Incubator in Youngstown to assist vendors to grow their enterprise. In the grant, we committed to underwrite up to 50% of rent space and start-up costs for any vendor who joined the incubator. We estimated that four (4) vendors would take advantage of the program. A total of eight (8) Howland Farmers Market vendors joined the incubator and requested assistance. We overestimated costs, so we were able to help more vendors at 100% of rent space and start-up costs including nutritional evaluation, labeling etc.. The vendors include: McDivitt Family Maple, Joe Schmo's Kitchen, Genevieve's Kitchen, Big City Tailgate, Flavor Benders, Plant Love Nutrition, Natural Excellence Farm and Gardens, and Sleepy Holly Farms. To drum up additional incubator users, the Howland Farmers Market and the Common Wealth Kitchen Incubator held a Taste and Tour Open House of the kitchen incubator on November 14, 2017. Existing incubator users had samples of their product available to taste and they were on hand to share their stories to attendees. There were 43 registrants of the event.

Howland Township partnered with the Trumbull County Health Department to establish the Bolindale Pop Up market which took place twice monthly throughout the Summer. The pop up market began in 2016 and will continue through this summer. Bolindale is a LMI neighborhood located in Howland Township. The pop up market is located at the Bolindale Christian Church to coincide with the twice monthly food pantry.

- b. Impact on Community: Access to a regional agricultural product was made easier through our partnership with the Lake to River Food Cooperative and their online market. While participation remains low, Howland Township will continue to serve as a drop location for the Lake to River Food Cooperative on-line market.

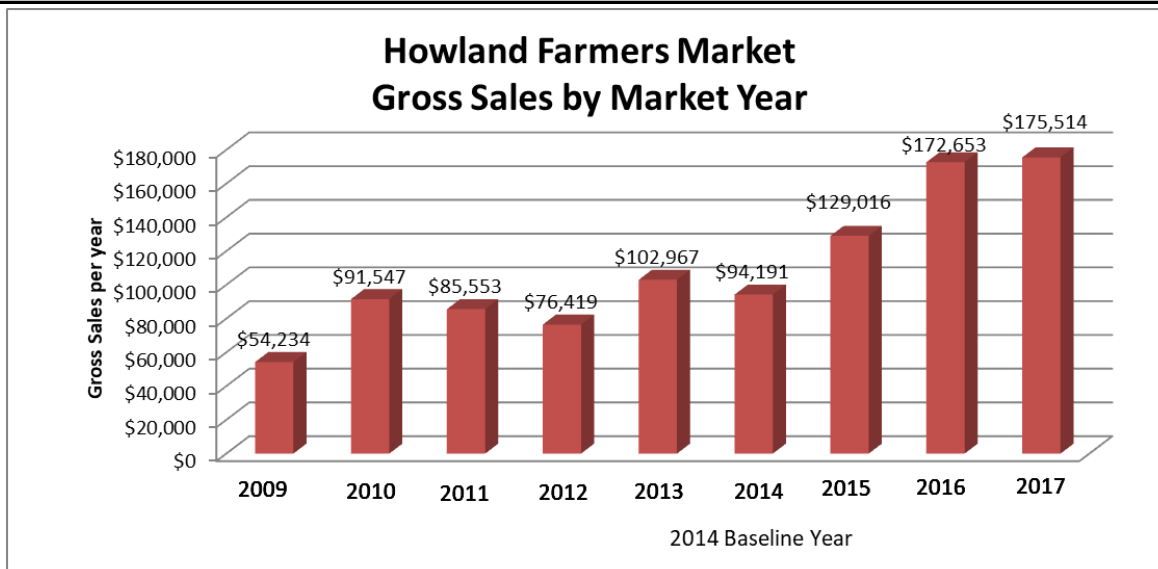
We achieved success with our partnership with the Common Wealth Kitchen Incubator in helping home-based vendors launch into small businesses. We committed to assisting four vendors, when eight participated in the program. Each vendor received an orientation of the kitchen, nutritional evaluation of their product, professional labels,

storage space, equipment use, and marketing and business coaching. The products being made by these vendors at the incubator are outstanding in quality and presentation and continue to be sold at the market. McDivitt Family Maple was able to leverage the assistance offered through this grant to obtain a grant through the Youngstown Business Incubator's Women in Entrepreneurship program. McDivitt Family Maple opened a store front and commercial kitchen facility as a result of this grant's support.

Our partnership with the Trumbull County Health Department is critical in the establishment of a twice monthly farmers market in an LMI neighborhood. The market increases access to fresh local produce by residents living in the Bolindale neighborhood, which includes approximately 700 households.

2. Quantify the overall impact of the project on the intended beneficiaries, if applicable, from the baseline date (the start of the award performance period, September 30, 2015). Include further explanation if necessary.
  - i. Number of jobs created: **One part-time position was created through the grant, the Howland Farmers Market Coordinator. The Howland Township Trustees have agreed to support this position past the grant period.**
  - ii. Number of jobs retained: **Nearly 60 vendors participate in the Howland Farmers Market. This grant helped to retain over 60 jobs associated with these vendors.**
  - iii. Number of markets expanded: **The Howland Farmers Market expanded into a year round market and will continue to as a year-round market past the grant period.**
  - iv. Number of new markets established: **The Bolindale Farmers Market was established as a twice-monthly pop-up market in the Bolindale neighborhood, an LMI neighborhood of Howland Township. This effort is also supported by the Trumbull County Health Department's Creating Healthy Communities program.**
  - v. Market sales increased by **\$81,322.65 or 86% over the 2014 baseline year.**
  - vi. Number of farmers/producers that have benefited from the project: Percent Increase:

Market Year	2016	2017
Number of Farmers	16	18
Number of Food Producers	15	25
Total Vendors (includes non-food vendors)	37	56



3. Did you expand your customer base by reaching new populations such as new ethnic groups, additional low income/low access populations, new businesses, etc.? If so, how?

Our ongoing partnership with the Children's Rehabilitation Center of Warren in hosting the winter farmers market allows us to expand access to local foods to the families of the 1,000 children they serve, approximately 65% of which are SNAP eligible. Additionally, the newly established pop-up market in the Bolindale neighborhood serves an LMI and low access population. Based on feedback from the community and continued support from the Trumbull County Creating Healthy Communities Coalition, Howland Township will continue the Bolindale pop-up markets beyond the grant period.

4. Discuss your community partnerships.

We are proud of our community partners and intend to continue to foster a productive relationship for the betterment of the Howland Farmers Market. OSU Extension provided educational resources in the Farm to Health Series and through the training opportunities provided to vendors and staff. We will continue to work with the OSU Extension to provide ongoing Good Agriculture Practices (GAP) training to our vendors. Our partnership with the Lake to River (L2R) Food Cooperative's Online Market will continue. Howland Township will remain a weekly pick-up location for the growing L2R Online Market. Membership for the Howland drop locations is at 96. Eight of our vendors joined the Common Wealth Kitchen Incubator to grow their business. We will continue to work with the Incubator in referring HFM vendors to the Incubator. The Trumbull County Creating Health Communities is partnering with the Howland Farmers Market to ensure LMI populations have access to healthy food choices at a newly established market in the Bolindale neighborhood of Howland Township. We intend to continue the Bolindale pop-up market into 2018.

5. Are you using contractors to conduct the work? If so, how did their work contribute to the results of the FMPP project?

We utilized contractors to assist with the production of marketing materials such as the Farm to Health Series, Winter Market Magnets, and the production of the HFM video series and commercials. The contractors are professionals in their field and were responsible for the marketing materials on behalf of Howland Township to help grow the Howland Farmers Market. We feel that they contributed to the success of this grant initiative and the overall success of the Howland Farmers Market. We also tapped into the professionals at the Ohio State University Extension for the farm and food safety workshops that were offered through the grant.

6. Have you publicized any results yet?\*

If yes, how did you publicize the results, to whom, and how many? Progress of the grant was publicized during the Township Trustees Meeting. The meetings were held twice monthly. Additionally, we are part of the Creating Healthy Communities (CHC), a program of the Trumbull County Health Department. The group consists of food security advocates, community organizers, farmers markets in the area, public health professionals, educators, and public officials. We announced grant progress to this group of stakeholders twice annually. Their feedback was helpful. Additionally, the Howland Farmers Market has nearly 3,700 Facebook followers to which we announced grant progress and milestones.

7. Have you collected any feedback from your community and additional stakeholders about your work?

The Township sought feedback from the market vendors throughout the grant period so that any minor adjustments could be made to better serve the vendors. It was this vendor feedback that led us to request a 6-month expansion of the grant. The extension allowed additional vendors to take advantage of the Common Wealth Incubator Kitchen support being offered through the grant.



8. Budget Summary:

- i. As part of the FMPP closeout procedures, you are required to submit the SF-425 (Final Federal Financial Report). Check here if you have completed the SF-425 and are submitting it with this report: ☒
- ii. Did the project generate any income? **YES**
  - a. If yes, how much was generated and how was it used to further the objectives of the award? Approximately \$29,000 in revenue was generated through vendor fees in program years 2016 and 2017. The revenue was used on Facebook advertising, local musicians, food demonstrations, portable toilets, banners, general supplies. Revenue generated after the grant period will be applied towards the Coordinator position in addition to advertising and market operations.

9. Lessons Learned:

- i. Summarize any lessons learned. They should draw on positive experiences (e.g. good ideas that improved project efficiency or saved money) and negative experiences (e.g. what did not go well and what needs to be changed).

Although the marketing materials funded through the grant helped promote the market generally, it was the professional support and training of market staff and vendors that strengthened the foundation of this market. Because of this grant, our staff and vendors have gained the skills needed to grow and sustain, not only the market, but in the case of the vendors, their individual businesses. It was rewarding to see vendor engagement in the training opportunities provided by this grant. If we were to apply to the USDA for another grant, it would be for additional training for staff and vendors. It would have been beneficial to have had the coordinator's position partially supported through the grant for a third year.

- ii. Describe any lessons learned in the administration of the project that might be helpful for others who would want to implement a similar project:

Initially, we felt that a two-year grant period would be sufficient to implement the programs areas. However, a three-year grant would have been more appropriate. Although we met our goal of recruiting four vendors to the Common Wealth Kitchen Incubator, it took more time than anticipated. It appeared that vendors did not want to be the first in the program. We worked with USDA staff to change the incentive ratio while maintaining overall budget constraints to lower cost of entry. It was late in the grant when vendors finally realized the benefits of the program and signed up. More time and resources could have been spent in this area. Additional vendors expressed interest only after the first group of vendors began to experience success in the Incubator. We continue to get inquiries. We refer them to the incubator but are not able to offer financial support.

10. Future Work:

- i. How will you continue the work of this project beyond the performance period? In other words, how will you parlay the results of your project's work to benefit future community goals and initiatives? Include information about community impact and outreach, anticipated increases in markets and/or sales, estimated number of jobs retained/created, and any other information you'd like to share about the future of your project.

Because of the success of this grant, the Howland Township Trustees have agreed to support the Howland Farmers Market as a year-round market and they will continue to support the Market Coordinator position. The winter market will afford dozens of farmers and small

food producers a year-round opportunity to grow their businesses. Knowing in advance that there will be a winter market gives vendors ample time to plan for the next season. No other farmers markets in our area have a year-round market. We anticipate that the growth of the winter market over the grant period will continue.

We will continue to partner with the Common Wealth Kitchen Incubator in identifying vendors and products that may benefit from the resources at the Kitchen Incubator. While grant support will not be available to vendors new to the incubator, the experience of those vendors who benefitted from the grant and used the incubator, can share their incubator experience to any new vendors. We feel this sharing of experiences and lessons is important, as many vendors' hesitation to use the incubator was rooted in the unknown.

We will continue to identify training opportunities that will benefit staff and vendors alike. The benefits of training our vendors and staff cannot be overstated in the future growth of this market and the safety of the products offered.

And finally, we will continue to serve as the Trumbull County pick up location for the Lake to River Food Cooperative Online Market. The online market sources their groceries from regional farms and food produces and from the Kitchen Incubator. While membership to the online market remains steady, use of the service dips during the summer months when local produce becomes more readily available.